



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

Contact Casey Kyler-West, Communications Director

TELEPHONE: (406)444-1520

FAX: (406)444-1394

e-mail: ckylerwest@mt.gov

P.O. BOX 1728

HELENA, MT

59624-1728

Barbara Wagner, Economist

(406) 444-5474

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(HELENA) --- Unemployment Rate 5.4%

(HELENA) --- Montana's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 5.4% in December, up from 4.9% in November. Montana continues to be well below the national average of 7.2%.

"Montana's unemployment rate has risen above 5% for the first time since January 2000. The recession, now global, is reducing demand for Montana's goods and putting Montanans out of work" said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "Some bright spots remain, however. The Leisure and Hospitality Industry added 1,100 jobs this month, with 2,500 jobs added since last December. Unfortunately, the losses in other industries outweigh these gains."

Seasonally-adjusted payroll employment decreased by 1,300 jobs from November to December. The total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, also decreased a similar amount, or by 2,228 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis.

The seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) decreased by 1% for the month of December, marking the third straight month of price deflation. Deflation was led by energy prices falling by 8.3% over the month; food prices decreased marginally by 0.1% for the month. The index for all items excluding food and energy, also referred to as core inflation, was unchanged for December.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The January 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Wednesday, March 11, 2009.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121